

THE USE OF CASE CONFERENCES TO FACILITATE
TREATMENT IN A STATE TRAINING SCHOOL

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Significance

Training schools of some type came into existence when society saw the need to save neglected, idle, vagrant, and delinquent children from the vicious influence of adult prisons.¹ Children are committed to a training school by a juvenile court when it is felt that their adjustments and the treatment necessary to meet their needs can not be achieved in their own homes, foster homes, or other community agencies.

In 1951, there were 210 national, state, and local public training schools providing care for dependent, neglected, truant, and delinquent children.² The institutions serving children have their own distinct purposes, with their own philosophies, their own policies and approaches. They use the best methods of other institutions if and when these are appropriate to their own special purposes.³ Some of these institutions have maintained certain practices of the former prisons from which the schools were separated long ago. Some institutions use mass treatment, repressive attitudes and corporal punishment while others give little more than physical and custodial care. These institutions have accepted the

¹Walter A. Friedlander, Introduction to Social Welfare (New Jersey, 1955), p. 461.

²Ibid., pp. 461-462.

³Ernest Papanek, "The Training School; Its Program and Leadership," Federal Probation, XVII (June, 1953), p. 16.

opinion that the training school is the place where troublesome and disturbed children may be committed for the safety of their homes and communities. These youngsters should be controlled by the denial of their liberty, enforcement of some general education and vocational training, and strict regulation of their activities. While still another type has developed an integrated program of rehabilitation for these children by providing a positive plan for group living under educational guidance. They provide medical and mental health supervision, academic and vocational training, recreation, and leisure time activities permitting as much freedom and choice as possible. Although this latter type represents a controlled environment of limitations and rules of group living, they contribute to a constructive development of the children and prepare them for a more satisfying life with their families and in their communities.¹

The training school is seen by some administrators primarily as a custodial agency, with treatment secondary. Some regard its function as educational and see the process of correction as an educational process. However, leading thinkers in the field believe that the main purpose of institutional placement today is treatment; and that training schools must be essentially treatment institutions with an integrated professional service; wherein the discipline of education, casework, group work, psychology, psychiatry, medicine, nursing, vocational rehabilitation, and religion, all play an important role.² It is believed in a training school,

¹Op. cit., p. 462.

²United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, Institutions Serving Delinquent Children: Guides and Goals (Washington, D.C., 1957), p. 2.

as in all education, that the treatment and re-education of the emotionally and socially disturbed juvenile delinquents should be child centered and focused on human relations. An attempt must be made to adjust or readjust them to a normal life in society, so that they will be able to lead a¹ personally satisfying and a socially constructive life.

In order to plan treatment for children who are committed to a training school a procedure must be used to obtain an understanding of each child. Such an understanding may be obtained through a diagnostic study while the child is in the reception center or orientation cottage. A diagnostic study should provide the necessary information for understanding the child's needs and it should be instrumental in planning treatment. In addition to the diagnostic or assignment conference; there are other case conferences which are instrumental to treatment. They are the progress review or parole conference, and special conference. The diagnostic or assignment conference is the first conference held which concerns the placement of a girl in the regular training school program. Another type of case conference is the periodic review. This conference is known as the progress review or parole conference. The girl's progress is reviewed at various intervals. There is also the special conference. This conference is held when a problem² arises which needs immediate consideration.

This service given to children who violate laws is an important part of modern social work. Maladjustment and delinquent behavior are among the most serious problems of our present society. Just as it seems necessary

¹Op. cit., p. 462.

²United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., p. 91.

from the point of view of social work, to help children and adolescents to avoid breaking rules; it is also necessary to help children and adolescents, who have been adjudicated delinquents, to adjust and lead a personally¹ satisfying and socially constructive life.

The writer is interested in the welfare of children; particularly delinquent adolescents. This interest has been enhanced by a field work placement in a training school for girls. She feels that knowledge of the use of case conferences to facilitate treatment in New York State Training School for Girls will contribute much to an understanding of the procedures necessary to affect any change in the behavior pattern of the juvenile delinquent.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe the use of case conferences in the treatment process. The study was concerned with the kinds of case conferences; when and why they were used; and what type of decisions and recommendations result from these conferences. The writer was also interested in seeing how the decisions and recommendations were reached and how they were carried out.

Method of Procedure

This was a descriptive study in which the use of case conferences was described and illustrated by cases. The sample consisted of ten cases selected from the files of New York State Training School for Girls. These cases were of girls admitted to the Training School from October, 1956 to October, 1957. The cases were selected at random. That is, the cases that

¹Walter A. Friedlander, op. cit., p. 441.

had two or more conferences were selected and then, those selected were chosen by a numerical pattern. The cases were used to illustrate the type of conferences held in the training school.

A schedule was used to gather pertinent data. The writer was interested in such information as the type of case conferences, reasons for the conferences, material discussed, how the material was used, and decisions and recommendations.

Scope and Limitations

Ten cases from the files of the New York State Training School for Girls, Hudson, New York, were used to obtain data for the study.

The study was limited to the available written material, cases, and books at the New York State Training School for Girls for a six months' period. Since the training school's manual was in the making, the inexperienced writer relied upon her observation of the practices and the available written materials. Lack of time and experience were a limitation on the part of the writer.

CHAPTER II

SETTING OF THE STUDY

History

There are many social agencies, public and private, that deal with the various social problems that occur in our society. The clientele of these agencies received the services either on a voluntary basis or through legal action. The New York State Training School for Girls is an agency who receives its clients through legal action. Because of this factor, we find that the agency has incorporated policies and treatment methods that is in accord with its function as a rehabilitation center, its responsibility to the clients and its responsibility to the Children's Court of the state.

Prior to the establishment of the New York State Training School for Girls in 1904, female delinquents between the ages of twelve and sixteen were sent to the girl's department of the House of Refuge at Randall's Island, New York, and the State Industrial School at Rochester. Both of these institutions cared for older women. However, in 1904 by legislative act, the House of Refuge at Hudson was changed to the New York State Training School for Girls. This institution was authorized to accept girls between the ages of twelve and sixteen who have been adjudged delinquent and committed to the school by the Children's Court of the State.¹

The New York State Training School for Girls is the only state supported

¹Annual Report of the Board of Managers of the New York State Training School for Girls for the Year Ending September 30, 1904 (Albany, New York, 1905), pp. 3-4.

institution for delinquent girls as compared to the five such schools for boys in the state of New York. They are the New York State Training School for Boys at Warwick, Otisville Training School for Boys, State Agriculture and Industrial School at Industry, Highland Training School for Boys at Highland, and an Annex of All Boys' Training Schools at New Hampton.¹

Structure

Administration.-- In New York, the training schools are maintained by the state and operated under the jurisdiction, supervision, and control of the State Department of Social Welfare.² A Board of Visitors is appointed by the Governor as his representatives. The board reports to the Governor its impressions of the conduct and welfare of the institutions and make recommendations for improvement. The board acts in an advisory capacity to the superintendent and functions through standing committees.³

The superintendent is the administrative head of the institution and he is responsible for establishing and maintaining acceptable standards throughout the school, and for the school's community relationships. As the administrator, he sets the tone and pace for everyone within the agency. He is the person responsible for the morale of the institution. His personality, character, convictions, training, experience, and skill are important factors in the establishment and continuation of an effective

¹New York Department of Social Welfare, Social Welfare Laws of the State of New York (New York, 1952), p. 176.

²Thomas J. Curran, Legislative Manual of the State of New York, 1951 (Albany, 1951), p. 634.

³Mrs. M. E. Jenkins, "The Administration of a State Training School for Girls" (Unpublished Thesis, Department of Social Work, Atlanta University, 1957), p. 37.

treatment program and in developing good staff relationship.¹ The superintendent has an assistant who is another administrative staff. "The assistant superintendent's qualifications and role depends on the particular institution."² At the New York State Training School for Girls, the assistant superintendent coordinates the work of the major departments. The clinical services, the psychologist and the psychiatrist, are responsible to her. There are directors of the various departments who are also responsible to the assistant superintendent. The director of community services is responsible for the after care and communication between the institution and the field or community. The director of cottage service supervises the social workers who are responsible for cottage life. The director of education supervises the academic and vocational training.

The Cottage Service program at the New York State Training School for Girls is different from that of other institutions. This department came about in July, 1956, when the former Home Life and Social Service Department were combined into the Cottage Service Department. The Cottage Service Department includes members of both departments who extend the services each had previously rendered to staff and girls.³ The supervisors of casework and group work are under this department. The cottage staff is also a part of this department. Since the cottage staff is with the girls most of the day, these members play an important role in rehabilitating the girls.

¹United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., pp. 18-19.

²Ibid.

³Mrs. M. E. Jenkins, op.cit., p. 74.

These skillful persons take the place of the girls' parents. Since this is such a responsibility for persons who have not had the necessary training to understand the dynamics of human behavior, they are supervised by the social workers who are supervisors of their cottages.

Defintion and Function.-- The New York State Training School is defined as "an institution for the care and training of girls committed by the Children's Courts of the State."¹ The institution does not have control over its intake and its clientele. The girls remain under the supervision of the institution until they have shown satisfactory adjustment for release from its care, or until they reach the age of twenty-one.²

The function of the institution is to re-educate and rehabilitate the girls under care. The modern method of accomplishing this is the individualized application of an integrated treatment program which recognizes the individuality of the child and the adaptation of the treatment program accordingly.³

Treatment Planning Program

Definition of a Delinquent Child.-- Since the institution was established for delinquents, it might be well to define a delinquent child.

A delinquent child shall mean a child (a) who violates any law or any municipal ordinance, or (b) who commits any act which, if

¹Abraham G. Novick, "Handbook for Girls" (Hudson, New York, New York State Training School for Girls, October, 1953), p. 1. (Mimeographed)

²Ibid.

³Abraham G. Novick, "Integrating the Delinquent and His Community," Federal Probation, XX (June, 1956), p. 39.

committed by an adult would be a crime, except a child fifteen years of age who commits an act which, if committed by an adult, would be punishable by death or life imprisonment, unless an order removing the action to the children's court has been made and filed pursuant to subdivision (c) of section three hundred twelve-e and subdivisions (a) and (b) of section three hundred twelve-f of the code of criminal procedure, or (c) who is incorrigible or ungovernable or habitually disobedient and beyond the control of its parent, guardian, custodian or other lawful authority, or (d) who is habitually truant, or (e) who, without just cause and without the consent of his parent, guardian or other custodian, repeatedly deserts his home or place of abode, or (f) who engages in any occupation which is in violation of law, or (g) who associated with immoral or vicious persons, or (h) who frequent any place the existence of which is in violation of law, or (i) who habitually uses obscene or profane language, or who begs alms or money in public places under any pretense, or (j) who so deports himself as to wilfully injure or endanger the morals or health of himself or others.¹

Definition of Treatment.-- Such a child as described in the definition makes up the institution's population. In order to render treatment to these children who come from different backgrounds and who have had different experiences, the services must be of a nature to help the individual child. Here it seems appropriate to define treatment: "treatment is the sum of all the activities and services in the training school which are directed toward helping the individual girl with her problems."²

Case Conference Committee.-- For treatment to be effective, diagnostic studies and evaluations must be made before and after the child is placed in the training school's open program. Such studies and evaluations should be made and discussed in case conferences by a committee which is composed of the key personnel and the staff members having day to day contacts with the girl concerned. This committee should consist of such personnel as the superintendent or the assistant superintendent, directors of cottage

¹New York Department of Social Welfare, op. cit., p. 150.

²Mrs. M. E. Jenkins, op. cit., p. 134.

service, community service, education, and recreation. The psychologist, psychiatrist, social workers, nurse, and chaplain are included in the committee. In order for training schools to be treatment institutions, there must be integrated professional service which comprise the named specialists. They play an important role and they are directly related¹ to human relations and personality development.

These persons have opportunities to participate in the conference and duties to perform in their daily work. The superintendent or assistant superintendent act as chairman over the two formal case conferences. In addition to participating throughout the session, the director of cottage service makes comments about the cottages and the number of vacancies. The director of community service makes comments about the community when it is necessary. The nurse and chaplain make comments and give their impressions of a girl when asked. The director of the recreational department contributes to the meeting also. Some social workers serving institutions conceive their principal responsibilities to be the admission and discharge of delinquents, limiting their work to investigations of case histories and preparation for discharge.² In contrast, in this institution, the social worker's responsibilities cover several areas. He supervises the cottage staff toward a better understanding of human behavior since the cottage staff and the social worker are responsible for a common treatment process. Since the cottage group is the key area for treatment, the social worker holds group discussions with the group and the staff to discuss problems

¹United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., p. 2.

²Paul Tappan, Juvenile Delinquent (New York, 1949), p. 455.

that are important to the group. It is felt that the group determines the girl's response to change. Within the structured group, informal groups prevail. These small groups share common interests. The social worker works with the small stable groups to help them to adjust to the total group; participate in its activities and assume meaningful relationships and take positive positions in the group. Although many girls can be helped in the group situation, there are some who need individual attention to meet their needs. The worker works with such girls on an individual basis.¹ The social worker also participates in the case conferences. He shares his understanding and thoughts about the girl's needs and how the needs can be met. In addition to these persons, there are the psychiatrist and the psychologist. Both of these specialists are part-time workers at the institution. It is advised in the Children's Bureau Publication that if psychiatric services are on a part-time basis, a major portion of the psychiatrist's time should be spent in consultation with the staff on special cases and aiding in staff development. In accordance with this, at the New York State Training School for Girls where the psychiatrist is part-time, his services are to make a diagnosis as to whether a child is psychotic, neurotic or has a behavior problem. He also helps the social workers in their therapeutic sessions with individual girls. The program of a part-time psychologist includes the reading of records, interviewing the girls, testing, evaluation and interpretation, and recommendations. The psychologist recommendations are important in planning

¹Abraham G. Novick, "Casework in the Public Training School for Delinquents" (Presented at the 83rd Annual Forum, National Conference of Social Work, St. Louis, Missouri, May 23, 1956), pp. 5-11.

¹

treatment. At the New York State Training School for Girls, because the psychologist is on a part-time basis and because of the time factor, we find her dealing mainly with the problems relating to personality functioning and intelligence that are referred by the social worker. She does give tests to new comers if their records do not include a psychological evaluation.

¹Mrs. M. E. Jenkins, op. cit., pp. 77-78.

CHAPTER III

DESCRIPTION OF THE CASE CONFERENCES

A classification procedure has been recognized as a necessity in institutions in the correctional field. Classification procedure takes various forms in different institutions. It is referred to as case conferences or evaluation conferences.¹ For the sake of this thesis, case conferences include assignment or diagnostic conferences, progress review conferences, and special case conferences. These conferences should have a definite pattern and schedule in which to discuss the case under consideration.² The conferences are best undertaken by a staff committee which is usually known as a case conference committee which is composed of the key personnel.³ In New York State Training School for Girls, the committee is chaired by the superintendent or the assistant superintendent and the members include the directors of cottage service and community service, supervisors of cottage service and recreation, nurse, chaplain, and the social workers who have day to day contact with the girls. The psychologist and the psychiatrist are represented by their written reports.

Before these conferences occur, a diagnostic study is made of each girl committed. This diagnostic study takes place while the girls are in the orientation cottage. The reception process includes either a diagnostic study or a supplementation of the clinical material received from the

¹Mrs. M. E. Jenkins, op. cit., p. 122.

²United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., p. 93.

³Ibid., p. 92.

community. The information is brought together to help the staff understand the girl's problems and be instrumental in planning treatment. The material received from the community included such diagnostic information as social, psychological, psychiatric, educational, and personal data. This information is supplemented by the institutional staff who work with the girls during the orientation period. This may be done by observations and interviews.¹ In addition to this, the New York State Training School for Girls executes other examinations such as educational tests, and psychological and psychiatric examinations when such do not accompany the community's material.

Assignment Conference

Definition and Function.-- At the end of the orientation period, the case is presented to the Case Conference Committee. "Before placing a girl in the regular training school program, there should be a case conference (diagnostic conference)."² As is indicated in the quote, the assignment conference is a diagnostic case conference which is held for the purpose of considering the girl's needs and placing her in the institutional program.

The assignment conference is the first formal conference. The Case Conference Committee comes together to discuss the report which was compiled during the girl's orientation period. At this time, the entire committee becomes aware of each girl's problem and plans her treatment by making decisions regarding the individual girl's program which include assignment to work, school and cottage.

¹Ibid., p. 90.

²Ibid., p. 91.

Method of Procedure.-- The procedure employed by the Case Conference Committee is as follows: The information in the individual case record is read. This information includes the problem, a summary of the social history, previous psychological, psychiatric, and medical history, school history, orientation worker's impression, and a cottage report. From this, a discussion of the individual needs, in terms of the type of cottage which would be helpful to her, evolves. After the decisions and recommendations are made by the committee, the representative from the educational department, who has the results of the educational tests, gives her report as to the girl's academic group and vocational interest.

Case Illustration.-- In order to show the kind of problems brought to the institution and the recommendations the Case Conference Committee makes, the following case is illustrated:

ORIENTATION SUMMARY

G____, Ada
Admitted: 1/22/57
Committed: 1/20/57 Bronx County
Born: 9/22-42

Religion: Catholic

Problem:

Ada was first known to the Children's Court on 10/1/56 on a neglect petition of policemen____. On 11/5/56, she was returned to court for truancy. She was placed on probation under her mother's promise to supervise her. She was returned to court by her mother for engaging in sexual relations with four adolescent males, and behavior problem in the home which included setting fires and violent outbursts of temper.

Personal and Family History:

Ada is the oldest of four out of wedlock children whose ages range from seven to fourteen. Her mother had affairs with four different men before she was legally married.

The mother stated that Ada was different from the other children. When about eight years of age, she presented herself nude before a man and has always been "boy crazy." During the early years of her life, she had to be looked after by different persons in boarding homes and never had a steady home. It seems that the mother sees the child as an interference in her married life.

Ada's father was of Jewish parentage and his mother objected to his marrying anybody outside of their faith. He was always afraid of being involved in a family situation. However, he could be relied upon for economic assistance. The stepfather works as a short order cook. The family owns their own home.

Medical History:

The child was born prematurely. She walked at two and a half years of age. She is doubled jointed. Had an appendectomy at five years. In 1948, she suffered a fractured skull when she hit her head on the faucet of the tub. The child had the usual childhood diseases.

School History:

She had homemaking in high school. She repeated the first grade but accelerated the second and third grades so that no actual time was lost on an overall picture. The quality of her work is satisfactory. No subject disability known.

Previous Psychiatric:

Detention House 1/20/57. Child represents the picture of a girl with a very primitive, infantile character structure. This defect has been present since a very early age. Superego is quite low. Ada shows very little remorse about her past actions. An indication that there is some superego development seen in her present depression. Ada takes what she wants and does as she pleases, with little ability for postponement of immediate pleasures. Gratification of sexual impulses is on a childish level. Aggressive drives have been dealt with in a very primitive fashion such as fire setting, stealing, and etc.

It is felt that this child should be placed in a controlled environment where prolonged contact with some mature adult figure and the opportunity for therapy may enable her to develop a more mature character structure.

Previous Psychological:

Detention House 1/20/57. This is a girl with marked feelings of helplessness and insecurity who compensated by a show of aggressive strength, alternating with displays of helpless babyishness. Because of the acting out potential, she probably needs intramural treatment. This, if it afforded opportunities for steady, structured, yet kindly relationships, might help her to

internalize certain superego values that have been lacking in the maternal example. There is no evidence of psychotic thinking. Certain dysrhythmias in the graphic material suggest the possibility of an epileptoid constitution, but nothing really gross along these lines is apparent. At the present, she earns a full scale I.Q. of 100.

Social Worker's Impression:

An attractive girl, poorly groomed and carelessly dressed. This in itself is the outward manifestal of the confusion that is part of Ada. She can be docile, conforming, and pleasant at rare intervals but more often is a self-willed, impulsive youngster who is carried away by her feelings of the moment. When faced with the need for controls, she is resistive, openly rebelling and lets go with profanity. At other times, she will try to assert her will by bargaining. She will follow instructions if she first can do something else.

She seems to have frequent moods of depression to regard herself as the "bad" child her mother has found her to be since infancy. She will recount, without prompting, some details of her community involvements with gangs and shows some limited awareness of her role and responsibility in encouraging sexual matter. Room confinement should be used sparingly for it is suspected that her fantasy life is great and she will create some disturbance in order to find solitude in her room.

Ada has the capacity to relate in a meaningful way and to benefit from casework help. She has good intelligence, has experienced some successes in the academic area and has some limited insight into her behavior.

Cottage Report:

Ada is a very disturbed girl who writes on the mirror, room and person with lipstick; keeps room and person very untidy and dirty. Has refused showers and baths, defiant and nasty. Has not cooperated or tried to since coming to the cottage.

Recommendations:

Cottage Y
Group 9
Sewing III¹

The adolescents' institutional care is determined by such a report.

The Case Conference Committee appraises the needs brought out in the report

¹From the files of New York State Training School for Girls, Hudson, New York, February, 1958.

and decides how and by what means these can be met. When the decisions are agreeable among the committee members, the recommendations are made. After the conference, the girl begins functioning in the open program. Each girl goes to her assigned cottage and becomes a member of her designated academic group and vocational group.

Although the cottages are the same in physical structure, they are different otherwise. The degree of behaviorial control of the girls differ in firmness, permissiveness, rigidity, and control. The cottage pressures have different effects on different girls. Some of the girls need and can function best under the pressures while others do not need the pressure and cannot function under such. For this reason, the firmness, permissiveness, rigidity, or control of the cottage has to be considered in placing a particular personality type. Placing a girl in a cottage that is firm when she needs a cottage with a permissive atmosphere can provoke the girl to act out in a negative manner.

The cottage group is also an important factor to consider in placing a girl in a particular cottage. The personalities that are in the cottage might conflict with the girl's personality under consideration. For this reason, particular care must be taken to avoid further problems for the girl and the cottage group as a whole.

As it was stated in the previous chapter, the cottage staff plays an important role in rehabilitating the girls. The staff has to understand and respect the girls in order to work effectively with personalities and behavior problems. Since the cottage parents represent parental figures, the personalities of the cottage parents have to be considered. If the girl's own parents had rejected her, for example, the cottage parents must

be sensitive of the girl's feelings, and understanding of the attention the girl might seek. All these things are taken into consideration during placement evaluation. It must be a cottage that will meet her needs and contribute to her emotional growth.

Since it was obvious that Ada needed to develop self control and to identify with mature, understanding adults, she was assigned to cottage Y. It was felt that here the house-parents and group climate would meet her needs.

The girls are placed in the academic groups according to their abilities and in a vocational class according to their interests and capacities. The results of Ada's testing placed her in group 9. Since she expressed interest in sewing and had the capacity for such, she was placed in a sewing class according to her skill. Thus, Ada was assigned to the type of program that appeared to be needed for her. However, the program can be changed if it does not meet a girl's needs. The cottage supervisor (who is a social worker) works with her on an individual and group basis.

The girls' program is an integrated one which also provided recreation, leisure time activities, and group living. Although this program allows as much choice and freedom as possible, it is a controlled environment in which the individual has to accept the limitations in their freedom and have¹ to conform to the rules of group living. This tends to help the individual to learn from the group and gain some self control.

In addition to planning for new individuals, the Case Conference

¹Friedlander, op. cit., p. 462.

Committee will review the program for a girl who is having difficulties in adjustment before the formal progress review meeting. It might be found that the girl's present program is not meeting her needs and a change is necessary. In such a case, the girl's entire program or the specific part that is not meeting her needs is changed.

Progress Review Conference

Definition and Function.-- There is a periodic review of the treatment¹ program as it affects each girl. Such a review is known as the progress review or parole conference. The committee members in this conference determine whether a girl is ready to return to the community and, if not, her present program is evaluated in terms of more adequately meeting her needs.

The committee members are the same as in the Assignment Conference with the superintendent acting as chairman. However, when he is not present, the assistant superintendent acts as chairman. As it is advised in the Children's Bureau Publication:

It is always desirable to have certain professional staff members present to insure that their technical knowledge is brought to bear on the situation under consideration. Individual staff members should not have the authority to make changes in a child's program.

All staff members working regularly with the child should either be at these review conferences, be represented, or submit a written report. The worker in the home community who is working with the family should have an opportunity to participate, if only through correspondence. (A summary of the conference should be prepared by the caseworker of the child under consideration).²

¹United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., p. 92.

²Ibid.

Method of Procedure.-- In New York State Training School for Girls written reports are composed prior to the meeting as in the case of the assignment conference. This procedure is described in the superintendent's memorandum to the department heads. The procedure of operation is as follows:

- (1) Social Service will send out to the respective department heads the names of those girls who are to be reviewed during the first week of the month prior to the meeting.
- (2) Upon receipt of the names, department heads will send out report forms to the appropriate personnel for completion
- (3) These reports must be returned to respective department heads in time for them to review their contents and to be returned to the Social Service Department by the first Wednesday of each month. These reports are to be made out in duplicate; one for the main record and the other for the New York office record.
- (4) Social Service will make a resume of these reports which will become part of the running record and will be utilized at the Progress Review meeting together with the main reports. The resume is also to be made in duplicate, the extra copy for the New York office.
- (5) The following reports are to be submitted to Social Service: (a) cottage (b) academic (c) vocational (d) social workers parole plan (e) resident social workers (f) psychologist (g) recreation (h) medical (i) dental.

Diagnostic evaluation on the part of the psychiatrist is to be included in the resident social worker's report.

Medical, dental, recreation and psychological reports are to be submitted directly to Social Service by the first Wednesday of each month.

- (6) Girls will be reviewed after they have been in the institution for a period of five months, which will constitute the first progress review and again after a period of ten months which will be designed as the second progress review. The list sent out by Social Service each month will show the review number. The same procedure outlined above will be in the effect for both reviews, with the following exceptions: (a) There may not be a formal designated meeting to discuss the first review. (b) Social Service upon completion of the resumes of the first review reports will bring to the attention of the assistant superintendent, or the superintendent during the assistant's absence, those girls who seem to be having difficulty or are not adjusting and will recommend either a referral to the progress review committee, discussion among the departments concerned, or if necessary a special conference to be called to discuss the problems involved.

(7) It will not be necessary for field social workers to be present at the progress review meeting. Neither will it be necessary for cottage staff to appear at these meetings. This does not preclude the possibility that the social workers, cottage staff and other personnel will be called to the meetings for special reports and discussions, and other purposes such as in service training.

(8) In order to keep up with the necessary and productive practice of having field social workers maintain their contacts with the girls in the institution, Social Service will arrange for each field social worker to visit the institution once every nine weeks. The amount of time that they are to spend at the institution will be determined by the Director of Social Service according to the needs involved.

(9) It is important to point out that the content of the reports to be submitted at the progress review meeting takes on added significance under the new system. Department heads should make sure that they review reports adequately, return those reports which they feel are deficient, and to add whatever comments they have about the girl. The report form could be an effective supervisory tool and should be used according.¹

It is further advised in the Children's Bureau Publication that:

This type of 'team planning' has several advantages. One is the development of a sounder, coordinated, individualized plan of treatment for each youngster. Another is the realization by each staff member that he is a contributing part of a unit, working toward the child's welfare.

Scheduled dates for review should be carefully observed. Such practice tend to prevent a child's being 'lost' and insure that the staff members will periodically evaluate their experiences. The review schedule should be elastic enough to permit review of any case before the regularly scheduled date whenever a need for special attention becomes apparent.²

The Progress Review Conferences are held on the third and fourth Wednesday of each month. They are the fifth and tenth months review conferences respectively. The reports that are submitted to cottage service for these conferences constitute one progress review report. Each member

¹Administrative Memorandum to Department Heads by Abraham Novick, Superintendent, New York State Training School for Girls, Hudson, New York, July 22, 1953.

²United States Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, op. cit., p. 93.

of the committee is supplied with a copy of the report during the conference. The reports are read and discussed in terms of each girl's problem, adjustment, and future plans. The overall report consists of the supervisor's report, the cottage report, community plans, medical, academic and vocational reports. From the overall report, decisions and recommendations are made by the committee after a discussion. This report is used to decide whether a girl has made a satisfactory adjustment; if she is ready for parole; the amount of progress she has made in terms of some or very little adjustment; if the girl desires or should remain in residence to complete vocational and academic training; if a girl needs special attention; and the girl's interest in school and her age are considered to determine whether she is ready for a chance in the community. After the conference, the girl is told the committee's decisions and the work with her is continued if she did not receive a parole.

Case illustration.-- To demonstrate the progress review report, the following report is illustrated:

PROGRESS REVIEW REPORT
January, 1958

D____, Tina
Admitted: 3/11/1957
Committed: 3/11/1957
Cottage: 8

Cottage Service:

Supervisor - Tina has made progress in exerting some control on herself. She is still impulsive. She has some awareness of her lack of self-control and also of her "don't care attitude" which she often uses as a defense mechanism. Tina craved attention and approval. If she is not given immediate recognition, she becomes angry and proceeds to act out.

Tina comes from a family of ten children. The mother has been over-burdened with the problems of managing the home. The family is now reduced in size, in that some of the older children are no longer in the home. Mrs. D. has visited regularly. She seems to have a great amount of warmth for Tina but some of this is controlled by her anxiety over Tina's failure to adjust.

Tina's efforts to improve her behavior won recognition from the staff and they requested that she be added to the December vacation lists. She was disappointed at not getting a vacation but was able to get herself settled after only a couple of days of pouting. Parole is recommended.

Cottage Report:

We have gone as far with this girl as it is possible to go where the girl's problem is considered. She still does give us troubles but they are precipitated by the group. Tina can not function well with large groups. She is always seeking attention. If the group is well mannered, Tina will misbehave and vice versa. Working alone with adults she performs nicely. She is obliging, courteous and willing. Tina will be 15 this month but as she tells it she has a very low I.Q. We have never been able to find the terms that would be understandable to this child. We recommend parole as there is nothing more to be done for this child in our institution. She is stubborn enough to behave herself in the community if only to spite us and not return.

Medical: 12/27/57

Weight: 115

Height: 5'4 $\frac{1}{4}$ "

Diagnosis: No restrictions.

Academic:

Tina was in group 5 at the 4th grade level. In the December achievement tests she tested at the middle of the 5th grade level, showing about a full grade improvement. She has made a good social adjustment. She is a nervous child who finds it difficult to stay in one place or position for any length of time. This makes it difficult for her to apply herself fully. She is inclined to tattle on others but in spite of this she seems to be liked by the other girls.

Vocation:

Cleaning with the housefather for 10 months. Tina does a fair job, but requires close supervision. She is a problem in that she has a disturbing influence on the group. She displays interest only for adult approval. Tina tries to assume responsibility, but her performance of given tasks is poor.

Community Plan:

This family is still living at the same address in a very highly delinquent neighborhood in the Bronx.

Mrs. D. seemed less overwhelmed and appeared more relaxed than on

previous contacts. Since she was different and talked more realistically about her financial problem and management of the home and the child, we let her know that we noticed this. She then told us that in addition to her continuing her contacts with the family agency, she now has some financial help also. She explained that her daughter who became pregnant married the baby's father who is a soldier. The baby was born with a RH factor condition.

Since her daughter's husband is in the service, she still lives at home and received an allotment which she shares with her mother toward the support of the home. Mrs. D. seemed quite happy to tell us this, stating that she does not have "to strain to stretch a dollar as much as I had to do before." The family still receives some assistance from the Department of Welfare.

Regarding plans for Tina, Mrs. D. is interested in having her daughter return home and continue school. She feels that she is less pressured now and able to understand and cope with some of Tina's problems. She also feels that Tina is benefiting from her stay in the Training School and will be able to make a better adjustment in the family group and in school.

It is the worker's feeling that Mrs. D. is ready to face her situation and has gained some insight into her own problems as well as those presented by Tina and the other children. Worker has noticed that her need to blame the community for the children's delinquent behavior has lessened and she now talks about helping the children to feel comfortable and happy in the home, and being able to give them spending money and encourage them to participate in supervised recreation.

Recommendation: 1
February Parole - to her home.

This was Tina's second or ten months review. She had not made any adjustment at all prior to her first or five months review. She returned to her own home but there are girls who do not return to their own homes. Some have to be placed in foster homes, wage homes, or remain in the institution until they are twenty one years old. One girl had been in various homes all of her life and did not want to return to a foster home or any

¹From the files of New York State Training School for Girls, Hudson, New York, February, 1958.

kind of home. She did not have a home of her own. Her siblings were also in some institution. She requested permission to remain in the institution to complete her vocational training.

Special Case Conferences

In many cases problems arise between the admission and departure of girls to and from the institution. The material that follows a girl from the community helps in understanding the dynamics of her situation. The personality development and behavior problem were influenced by the dynamics. Consequently, the behavior problems the girl presents are understandable. The knowledge of human growth and development affords professional workers with the tools necessary to understand and accept the girl for her worth and dignity. In order to re-educate and rehabilitate the emotional, social, and sometimes physically disturbed girl, the professional workers have to utilize their knowledge of human beings and the tools to serve them. Not only do the workers have to work with the girl but also with non-professional individuals who also work with her. In order to be most helpful, the professional workers have to utilize all available resources. In doing so, it might be necessary to make contacts with other professionals of various fields to gain a better understanding of handling problems that arise. Such contacts might develop into conferences around immediate problems or problems that need deeper concentration than the social worker is equipped to handle.

Definition and Function.-- Such conferences are called special case conferences. These conferences are held in accordance with the need. They can be impromptu or planned. They may include two or more individuals. The conferences sometimes include the psychiatrist and the social worker; the psychologist and the social worker; cottage staff and the social worker;

social worker and other personnel such as the department heads or administrative staff. All these special case conferences are centered around a girl's problem. In addition to understanding how to handle certain problems or emotional illnesses, these conferences provide in service training for staff members who do not have an understadding of individual's development and the possible ramifications.

Method of Procedure.-- When a special case conference is planned, a referral is made by the social worker. If the referral is made to the psychiatrist or the psychologist, the girl is seen by them and then they confer with the social worker.

Illustration.-- Such is illustrated by the following psychiatric report:

PSYCHIATRIC REPORT

This fourteen and a half years old girl was seen for the first time today because of her impulsive behavior in the cottage and her constant arguing and "talking back" to the cottage staff.

Past history reveals that the girl is the oldest of four children and that all of them have been born out-of-wedlock. There have been three different fathers in the home and this has been a big source of confusion to the girl because she states that everybody tells her to do things differently. She always thought her father was dead until several years ago when she found out he was alive. During her early years until about the age of five or six, she was boarded out in various foster homes. Her father and mother worked. She is able to state that she has always had the feeling whenever anybody tells her to do something that she wants to do it her own way. She also admits to being in a county hospital for four admissions between 1948 and 1956 where she was diagnosed as "emotionally disturbed." She states that the mother has told her that on several occasions, she has had temper fits and outbursts and has cut her clothes and even set fire to some things in the house although she does not remember any of this.

During the interview with me, she was oriented in all spheres, no psychotic ideation, hallucinations or delusions were noted. She seemed to be a little guarded and her mood seemed to be a little bland. Her affect was appropriate to the mood and the content of thought. It was only at the end of the interview, when she spoke

about making a parole that she began to cry and showed signs of some frightened, depressive feelings. She was able to state that she gets angry very easily and that these feelings depend on how she feels each day and they vary from day to day. She was enuretic until approximately two years ago and she was able to admit that she does things impulsively and does not particularly care what anybody else says. Her thinking is very concrete and quite simple. There is also some evidence of some unrealistic and almost grandiose ideas about what she wants to do for herself.

This girl's background gives ample evidence for the diffuse picture we see here. There is a very minimal concept of herself as a person as well as minimal concept of any ego ideal. Basically, she is a very frightened, confused, little girl, who is attempting to make some sort of form and structure out of the adult world by listening only to her own needs and feelings. She has been unable to this point to have any faith, trust or real warm relationship with an adult figure.

She obviously needs a warm, non-threatening, firm sort of environment. I feel that possibly more could be gained in relating to her if things were suggested to her rather than told to her so that she could get the feeling that she is sharing in a relationship with somebody.

She will also be placed on Sparine, 25 milligrams, three times a day to see if it can curb some of this impulsive behavior. Diagnostically, she could be classified as a Schizoid Personality with many underlying depressive and aggressive features.¹

Although the cottage supervisor or social worker holds regular conferences with the cottage staff, a conference might occur around a specific problem or situation. This might be illustrated by an excerpt taken from the record file of New York State Training School for Girls.

We have enlisted help of the cottage staff in trying to meet some of the needs of this girl and have had extended conferences within the cottage with the girls and staff, discussing in a very friendly, "family" kind of way what each of us might do to give Dee the kind of security and interest which she needs. First in planning was the preparation of the girls in the cottage. Staff was asked to interpret to them the reason for Dee's transfer which was simply because we felt we did not wish to change her social worker and since Mrs. V. is no longer the worker for Cottage Z this arrangement need not be extraordinary. Hence, we hoped to eliminate many of the elements which might have been threatening to staff or girls. Next, we decided that although Dee is a notably poor housekeeper, she should be given one of the nicest rooms in the "honor" section of the first floor, hoping that she might be able to extend herself to

¹Ibid.

a new plateau of responsibility. Third, we decided that she should have particular help on the matter of assembling a wardrobe of presentable clothes.

Girl improved in neatness, cleanliness of her room, image of self, capable of forming stable peer relationships, recognizes she will not make parole and is accepting of it.¹

This sort of conference is geared to help the cottage staff work more meaningful with the girl around her problem. These kinds of conferences are considered a means of bridging the gap between the two formal conferences.

¹From the files of the New York State Training School for Girls, Hudson, New York, February, 1958.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In the preceeding pages, the writer has presented a descriptive study of the use of case conferences in the treatment process in a state training school for girls. Cases were used to illustrate the case conferences.

This chapter is concerned with the recapitulation of the salient points and findings of this study.

The early life experiences might have damaging effect upon personality development if the earlier needs are not met satisfactory. Early conflicts with dependency, authority, and sex are revived at the beginning of adolescence. If these conflicts are not resolved, the adolescent will usually seek satisfaction by other means. The methods used are sometimes in conflict with society. For this reason, many delinquents who are committed to an institution have problems that derived from these earlier experiences.

When society saw the need to control anti-social behavior, institutions came into existence. Commitment to these institutions was used as a means of punishing the delinquent. There was very little attempt to treat adolescents for social or emotional disorders. These individuals were not allowed full expression in healthy activities or any training that would be useful to them when they returned to their communities. However, as there was a transition in the understanding of human behavior, there was a transition in the philosophies of institutions that served children. Previously, custodial care was the major focus in alleviating the problems of

adolescents while treatment was secondary and relatively limited. Some institutions modified their philosophies and functions from predominate custodial care to incorporate rehabilitative measures of treatment through training and re-educating delinquent children.

New York State Training School for Girls, established in 1904, modified its policies and treatment methods to be in accordance with its function as a rehabilitative center, its responsibility to the clients, and its responsibility to the Children's Court of the state. The institution strives to fulfill its responsibility to the clients through various forms of treatment. For treatment to be effective, diagnostic studies and evaluations are made before and after the girl is placed in the training school's program. The diagnostic study is important in determining the girl's problems and the best possible means of meeting her various needs in the institutional program.

The diagnostic study is made during the girl's orientation period. To accomplish the study, the community's information is used and is sometimes supplemented with information that the institutional staff gathers through observation and interviews. After the diagnostic study has been completed and at the end of the girl's orientation, the diagnostic evaluations are made in case conferences by the Case Conference Committee. The information discussed in the conferences give the staff an opportunity to understand the problems involved in a girl's situation. This understanding facilitates treatment plans for the girl.

The case conferences are of three type: the assignment conference, progress review conference, and special case conference. The assignment conference, which is diagnostic in nature, is the first formal conference

held on a girl at the close of her orientation period. It is in this conference that the decision is made about the girl's open program.

The girls' adjustment is re-evaluated at five and ten months intervals by the Case Conference Committee to determine the progress made over these periods. These evaluations occur in the Progress Review Conference.

The special case conference is held in accordance with the need. This conference is centered around an immediate problem which is causing conflict. They are held in an effort to understand how to handle certain problems or emotional illnesses. They also provide in-service-training for staff members.

This thesis is a description of the use of case conferences to facilitate treatment. Case conferences are utilized in several ways as a treatment method for the girls. First, they make for better treatment through the diagnostic material that is presented at the assignment conferences. The diagnostic material gives the case conference committee an understanding of each case presented in the conference. Through discussion of the material, the committee is able to determine the girls' needs and how each girl can best be treated by the institution's facilities. Secondly, they serve as a tool in in-service-training. That is, the persons who are dedicated to helping in the personal adjustment of the girls are able to gain a better understanding of child care; the function of the various disciplines, such as psychiatry, psychology, cottage service, academic and vocational training, medical, and the community. Thirdly, the conferences coordinate the above disciplines to facilitate the continuing work of the institution. This coordination also contributes to a sounder plan of treatment for each girl and gives each staff member a feeling of contributing as a unit, toward the welfare of the girl served. Fourthly, the case

conferences provide for continuous evaluation of the institutional treatment program. They also allow for evaluation of the individual girl's program every five months. A girl who presents a problem is given special attention to determine the need for change of program. By so doing, it can be determined if the institution is meeting the needs of the girl.

In conclusion, much can be said in the defense of the importance of case conferences. In the form they take at the New York Training School for Girls, the conferences are directed toward better diagnosis and treatment of the girls served. Here, as well as in other institutions, the individual girl's welfare is the center of all planning. Therefore, continuous improvement is the goal in order to meet the diverse needs of the individuals served by this institution.

Although the case conferences are time consuming, the end results of a better understanding of the individual problems of each girl, coordination of the work of each department, and better understanding of each worker's role in the institution are achieved.

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APPENDIX

SCHEDULE

Case No.

Types of conferences

Reasons for conferences

Material discussed

How material was discussed

How material was used

What was the decision of the conferences?

What were the recommendations?